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## IS THERE A SOCIAL MIND ?—*Continued*

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### ABSTRACT

A society may be correctly characterized as: (1) a class; (2) a whole; (3) an individual; and (4) a system. Can it be also (5) a compound? It cannot be a member of itself for this would violate the "vicious circle" principle. It may be said to be homogeneous with its members. But the question is whether the distinguishing functions of a social whole are of the same type as that of a whole man. The principle of unity may be (a) of a different type, (b) quantitatively different, (c) higher than, or (d) lower than, its members. Our minds should be rid of the assumption that a more inclusive whole must be of a higher order. It is possible to regard society as different in type from a man, as was done in the medieval conception of the universal community. Therefore the unity of society is not necessarily the same as unity of mind. Nor is it possible to contend that society and man are quantitatively different. As to higher and lower, the more unified and more versatile are higher, and owing to the complexity of our life a human "cell" belongs to many bodies, so that the firm hold on the parts is lost and the unity which distinguishes developed organisms does not exist. Moreover, the approach in mechanized industry to the solidarity of an organism may debase the members of it. It seems clear that the things which a social group can do are less worth doing than what a man at his best can do. Social groups are wholes, but they are wholes of an inferior type. Is society a mind? Yes, if we refer to the lower functions or habits, or abstract functions as unified control but not the higher unities. A caution must be made against personification which leads to superstitious veneration and idolatry. Finally, the social mind must refer to the difference in behavior due to social causes. The social mind is therefore not a new being of a higher order.

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It appears that a society may significantly and correctly be characterized as: (1) a class, (2) a whole, (3) an individual, and (4) a system. It remains to be seen whether a society is (5) a *compound*, in the sense of being a whole of the same kind as its human members.

We have first to note that there is no a priori reason why this should be the case. It does not occur to us to call an alphabet a compound or collective letter; or the row a collective book; or the army a collective soldier. It is, therefore, not necessary, on the face of it, that a whole composed of men should be a collective man; or that a whole of wills should be a will; or a whole of minds, a mind; or a whole of purposes, a purpose. Indeed, judging by the foregoing analogies, the presumption would seem to be against

it. On the other hand, we do appear to have organisms composed of organisms, so that we cannot regard the question as closed.

We have next to note that a whole cannot be a member of itself. This is the so-called "vicious-circle" principle.<sup>1</sup> Mankind cannot be a man in the sense of a member of the species. The American nation cannot be an American of whom the census would take account. The American mind cannot be one of those "best minds" that make up the Republican Party. The mind of President Harding's Cabinet cannot, like the Vice-President, attend as an extra member at the conference table. In conceiving of a compound we must, therefore, be careful to avoid this offense against logic. There are still, however, several senses in which a whole may duplicate its members.

In the first place, it may be said to be homogeneous with its members. This is a self-evident truth; but, even so, it is important to extricate it and set it down by itself, lest too much be made of it. A forest, being composed of trees, may be said to be arboreal; a pack of dogs is canine; a nation of men, human. This means absolutely nothing more than that a society of minds is a society *of minds*. Another way of expressing the same thing is to speak of "social mentality"; or, more simply but more ambiguously, "social mind." This last mode of expression is possible owing to the fact that the word "mind" is used both as an ordinary common noun to which the indefinite particle is commonly prefixed, or, which is commonly used in the plural, as when one says, "two minds are better than one," and also as a "substantive term,"<sup>2</sup> like "water," "salt," or "oxygen," as when one speaks of mind as the correlative of matter.<sup>3</sup> The ambiguity is rendered even more subtle and elusive by the fact that it is possible to use the indefinite article with a substantive term. Thus one may speak of "a salt" or "an acid" when one means to refer to a variety of the kind. So, similarly, one may speak of "a mind," meaning a variety of the mental kind; and the expression "a social mind" would be perfectly

<sup>1</sup> It is formulated by Whitehead and Russell as follows: "Whatever involves *all* of a collection must not be one of the collection." *Principia Mathematica*, 1910, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Keynes; *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> The same ambiguity attaches to "life," "soul," and other words.

correct in this sense, as referring to one of the varieties of social mentality.<sup>1</sup> But it is more common in such cases to use the definite article, as when one speaks of "the scientific mind," or "the infant mind." Social mind, in this sense, then, there undoubtedly is. The fact is important and well worth studying; but the proof of the fact is not important because once its meaning is clear there cannot be the slightest doubt about it.

There is unquestionably something more that lurks in the background and furnishes the real bone of contention. There is a sense in which the question, "Is there a social mind?" still remains unanswered. This residual question can be expressed as follows: "Is a society a member of the same class as its members?" This does not necessarily involve a vicious circle. The members of a whole, such as the American nation, can belong also to a more extended and definitive class or species, such as mankind; and at the same time the whole itself, the American nation, can be said to be a member of this same larger class without being said to be a member of itself. Nations and men, in other words, can without logical offense be said to be fellow-members of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

But there is another and perhaps clearer way of putting our residual question, as follows: "Is the unity or collective novelty of a society of the same type as that of its constituent minds?" A mind, in the ordinary man-woman-or-child sense, is a whole which is distinguished from its elements by novel and peculiar functions of its own, such as thinking or willing. Minds of this order are then constituents of a whole which we call a society, and this in turn will have its own novel and peculiar functions. Since the novel and peculiar characteristics of a whole give it its unity, let us speak of them simply as constituting the principle of unity of any given whole. The question is, then, whether the novel and distinguishing functions, or the principle of unity, of a social whole is of the same type as that of a whole man or a whole woman or a whole child.

<sup>1</sup> Or a man could be said to have "a social mind" when his mind was of the social type.

<sup>2</sup> Provided, of course, mankind is not construed as the sum of men, women, and children. Similarly the sum of *legal* persons would include both a man and also a corporation of which he was a member.

I have said "of the same type" because it is clear that they cannot be strictly the same.<sup>1</sup> There seem to be at least four possibilities which it is useful to distinguish. First, (a) the principles of unity may not be of the same type at all. Fourteen persons going up in an elevator compose an aggregate weight of one ton; but the unity of a person and the unity of a ton are so utterly incommensurable that it is meaningless to speak of one in terms of another, even in the most qualified sense. Similarly the pictures in an exhibit may compose one thousand yards of canvas, the whole being entirely lacking in the aesthetic unity that distinguishes the members. Or two thousand Harvard students may be so arranged in position and costume as to compose a letter "H," though the unity of the student himself is neither literate nor aspirate.

Second, (b) the principles of unity may be of the same type, and differ only quantitatively. In the frontispiece to the original edition of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the commonwealth or body politic is represented as a gigantic human figure made up of smaller human figures. The form of organization is the same in the two cases, the only difference being one of size. Similarly there are big fortunes composed of little fortunes, big spaces composed of little spaces, big numbers composed of little numbers, or buckets of water composed of drops. In these cases it is undoubtedly appropriate to use the same common noun for the inclusive group as for the component members, provided the noun is qualified as to magnitude.

Our third and fourth alternatives are alike in that in both cases the unity of the whole and of the member are qualitative varieties of the same type, varieties which may be arranged in an ascending and descending scale of development. We shall then have as our third alternative, (c) the case in which the principle of unity of the whole is higher than that of its members; and as our fourth alternative, (d) the case in which the principle of unity of the whole is lower than that of its members. Let us now illustrate these two

<sup>1</sup> For the obvious reason that the members of the more inclusive whole are more complex than those of the included whole. Furthermore, it is only in so far as a society has properties, numerically, if not qualitatively different from those of its members that it deserves the name of whole at all.

last alternatives from the field of biology, which will afford us a natural approach to the social application.

c) The third alternative, in which the principle of unity of the whole is higher than that of its members, is illustrated by the relation of the plant or animal organism to its component cells. We shall have to thread our way carefully here, because in these days it is as customary among biologists to think of an organism as a society of cells as it is among sociologists to think of a society as a single organism. The fact is that these terms, like the term "individual," have ceased to have more than a relative value. Hence it is necessary to use terms like cell, alga, ant-colony, man, America, etc., which refer to particular instances. Among the algae, the botanists describe an Alpine aquatic plant known as the *Hydrurus foetidus*, which is made up of a colony of unicellular algae which have lost their independence and assumed specialized functions relative to the life of the plant as a whole. When the *Hydrurus* organism is fully formed the component unicellular algae have as a group become more heterogeneous, but at the same time each in itself has become more homogeneous and primitive. It has proved possible in the case of another alga, *Cladophora*, to reverse this process of assimilation. The compound organism has a definite plant form with an attached base and a growing apex, and the component cells are subordinated in structure and function to the life of the whole. When, however, the plant is put in a strong salt solution it is transformed into a mere aggregate of unicellular algae, each cell proceeding to set up in business for itself with its own base and its own apex.<sup>1</sup>

Or to bring out the same fact we may express the plant as a sum of relations to diverse aspects of its environment, to gravity, soil, moisture, light, etc. In the plant organism as a whole all of these different relations are functionally represented and co-ordinated. But the specialized part of the plant is limited to some one of these relations, and is a comparatively primitive unit of life.<sup>2</sup> Similarly an animal organism can both see and hear; but the ear is blind, and the eye is deaf.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. B. Farmer, *Plant Life* (Home University Library), 1913, chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. M. Coulter, *Plant Relations*, 1900, Introduction, chap. viii, and *passim*.

We have here, then, cases in which a living whole is a more advanced variety of the same type as its components.<sup>1</sup>

d) For an admirable example of the fourth alternative in which the more inclusive whole is of a lower variety than its member I am indebted to a study by Professor W. M. Wheeler, called *The Ant-Colony as an Organism*.<sup>2</sup> Having defined organism to mean a co-ordinated system of activities directed to its own nourishment, reproduction, and protection, the author then goes on to show that the ant-colony takes as a unit exhibits not only these fundamental characteristics common to all organisms, but also many of the more specialized characteristics found in plants and animals. The colony maintains its identity and resists dissolution or fusion with other colonies. In its nest it has a shell like a mollusk. This nest is built toward the sun, or is heliotropic. In the division between the mother queen and the virgin males and females, who are devoted to working and fighting, the colony manifests the duality between the germ plasm and the soma. Similarly, the ant-colony manifests many of the specific characteristics of growth, restitution of lost parts, recapitulation, and other distinctive organic phenomena.

But what has interested me most in this illuminating analysis is a point which the author has not emphasized. In so far as we regard the ant-colony as an individual organism, *we find it to be of a lower variety than its components*. An ant-colony, in other words, is a less developed animal than an ant. "Undoubtedly," says our author, "if we could see it acting in its entirety, the ant-colony would resemble a gigantic foraminiferous Rhizopod, in which the nest would represent the shell, the queen the nucleus, the mass of ants the plasmodium and the files of workers, which are continually going in and out of the nest, the pseudopodia."<sup>3</sup> Now

<sup>1</sup> This is true whether we think of the component cells in their form as subordinate parts of the multicellular alga, or in their independent form as unicellular algae.

<sup>2</sup> *The Journal of Morphology*, XXII (1911), 307-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 312. Professor Wheeler refers to the more comprehensive colonial individuals as more "efficient" (p. 324). But apparently simpler (such as unicellular) forms of life are just as efficient as the higher forms, if we mean capacity to survive. Perhaps it is the very primitiveness of the colony that constitutes its strength. Cf. J. B. Farmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

I do not know as much as I wish I did regarding the characteristics of the foraminiferous Rhizopod, but I find that it is classified among the protozoa, which I presume is sufficient to establish its inferiority in the scale of animal life to the proverbial ant.

We have here, I believe, a clue of first-rate importance for the clarification of our question. It should rid our minds wholly of the assumption, which is both natural and habitual, that a more inclusive whole must be a whole of a higher order. We have now seen that just the opposite may be the case. If a colony of ants may compose a big but rather rickety Rhizopod, so an organization of men may conceivably compose nothing better than an overgrown Hydrurus. In fact there is no logical reason why even "the Absolute," much overrated in certain philosophical circles, should not be something even more primitive than the Hydrurus.

We should now be equipped to face the question of the similarity between a social whole and one of its human members. Having distinguished the four logical alternatives among which the truth lies, the rest should be appealed to the evidence of fact. Is a social whole a mind, or a person, or a will, in the sense in which these terms are understood when applied to men? We shall do well to consider each of the alternatives in turn, though the consideration must be brief.

a) Is the social whole of a different type from that exemplified by men? It is clear that it *may* be so conceived. During the Middle Ages it was customary to conceive of the aggregate of men as composing a unity, an order, a harmony, or corporation, which was a partial whole within the greater whole of the world itself. This was called the universal community, or realm, or church, or the "Commonwealth of the Human Race."<sup>1</sup> This commonwealth was composed of men, but its unity was conceived in formal terms and not in the distinctive terms that give unity to a man. It is true that each constituent man was also conceived as a unity, order, or harmony; but the point is that it was not this that made him a man. The objection which some modern writers urge against the medieval conceptions of society is just this, that they

<sup>1</sup> Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, Maitland's translation, 1913, pp. 9, 10.



did not apply to social wholes those properties, such as mind, personality, and will, that distinguished the individual man.

The importance of this consideration for our purposes lies in the fact that it is quite possible to attribute wholeness to society without attributing to it the *kind* of wholeness that characterizes its members. The conception of social mind has derived force quite illegitimately from the supposition that in order to regard a social group as a *whole of minds*, being composed of minds, and having unity, order, and harmony, it is necessary to regard it as a *whole mind*. A society may be composed of minds, as it doubtless is, and a society may have unity, as it doubtless does, but these facts would not of themselves create the slightest presumption that the unity of a society is the same as the unity of a mind.

b) Is the social whole of the same type as man, but bigger? Is a society a gigantic man? In general terms the answer seems to be clear. This view can be maintained just so far, and only so far as man is conceived of in terms of extensive magnitude. There are two conceptions of the essential man which would prohibit this view altogether: the traditional view of soul-substance traceable to St. Augustine; and the modern view of consciousness as the field of introspection. According to the soul-substance theory, the mind is a simple and indivisible activity, so that a compound soul would be self-contradictory; according to the introspective theory, the mind is private, so that a shared or common mind would be self-contradictory. On the other hand the view is entirely tenable in so far as a man is thought of primarily in terms of extensive magnitude. If a man is the Number 1, as when he is counted; if he is six feet of stature, or 150 pounds of protoplasm, or three score years and ten, or five cubic feet of flesh and bone, or has one hundred dollars worth of property; then the society to which he belongs can readily be viewed as a bigger number, or stature, or weight, or age, or volume, or wealth. Or if a man be thought of as the aggregate or stream of his states of mind, then a society can readily be viewed as a greater aggregate or ocean of states. There are, however, defects in these conceptions of man that would undoubtedly deter us from regarding a society so conceived as possessing the full complement of human prerogatives.

But what if we conceive man biologically, as the animal man? Can we then view society as a bigger variety of the same species? This, as is well known, has often been tried. John of Salisbury, in the twelfth century, and Nicholas of Cusa, in the fifteenth, made especially notable attempts to correlate the parts of the "body natural" and the "body politic." According to the former writer, "the prince is the head, the senate the heart, the court the sides, officers and judges are the eyes, ears and tongue, the executive officials are the unarmed and the army is the armed hand, the financial department is belly and intestines, landfolk, handicraftsmen and the like are the feet."<sup>1</sup> When these feet are in distress, as is so often the case, the state has gout. The ecclesiastics, using the same method, argued against the claims of the state that if the emperor as well as the pope were a head, the organism of mankind would be a "two-headed monster, an *animal biceps*."<sup>2</sup> But such efforts to conceive society in the image of man were not in the end successful. The state, owing to the number of its feet, turned out to be a centipede; and the growing strength of the imperial party forced the conviction that mankind did in fact have two heads. Thus the outcome of an effort to enhance the dignity of men was to conceive them as members or organs of a bicephalous centipede.

In more recent times this mode of thought has been revived by Spencer and others,<sup>3</sup> with greater plausibility, but with no greater eventual success. Government is the nervous system and transportation the circulatory system, until one comes to close quarters with them and notes how different they are. Indeed, if you examine Hobbes's picture of the Leviathan with an attentive eye you will note that while there is a close resemblance between the figure of the big man and the figures of the little men that compose it, there is this important difference—that the big man has no skin. Now, while in a picture that may fail at first even to catch the eye, biologically it is a matter of some importance.

The fact is, as will scarcely need to be argued, that whatever of truth there is in this view is analogical or figurative. This means

<sup>1</sup> As summarized by Maitland, in Gierke, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.

<sup>2</sup> Gierke, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. W. Coker's *Organismic Theories of State*, chap. iv.

that a society, like man, has some of the formal characteristics of organicity, such as control and conduction; and that it is convenient to represent them by that embodiment of them, namely man, which is most familiar and striking.

Society, then, is not a gigantic man made of little men, but is a whole of a type similar to that exemplified in men. Society is a whole, men are wholes; society is an organization, men are organizations; according to certain definitions, society is an organism, men are certainly organisms. Is society a whole, or organization, or organism of a higher or of a lower variety than men? These are our third and fourth alternatives, which we shall consider together.

*cd*) Is the social whole a higher variety of the same type as its members? Is it, in other words, more than man, a superman? Or is it a more primitive whole, resembling the plant or the infra-human animals?

In making this comparison we must be careful to note both what we are comparing and also our standard of comparison. We are not comparing the component man with the group in the sense of all that the group contains. For obviously in that case the group would be all that any single man can be and incomparably more beside. We are comparing the component man with the group *as a whole*, that is, in respect of its collective novelties, or those characteristics possessed *only* by the group as such.

As regards standards of comparison, in order to avoid arguing this fundamental question I shall use the terms "higher" and "lower" in two specified and limited senses. Adopting the common biological scale I shall assume "higher" means more unified and more versatile; and I shall regard certain activities such as will, reason, and the creative imagination as higher than certain others such as metabolism, nutrition, appetite, sense, or habit.

First, as regards unification, what do we find? Many social groups only borrow their members or share them with other groups. In the history of human society this tends to be the case to an increasing degree. As has already been noted, the number of social groups to which any given human individual belongs tends to diversify and multiply; with the result that a man is not wholly

assimilated by any one of them, but possesses an independence proportional to the other groups in which he might continue to function were he to be excluded from the first.<sup>1</sup> It is doubtless true that one among these groups, namely the political, is designed to exercise supreme control in case there is a rivalry of allegiance, but the fact remains that the citizen is only partially political. He conducts the greater part of his life in other spheres and under other forms of control.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand there are some cases of social organization, such as the highly mechanized industry which absorbs and adapts all of the waking hours and vital energies of the workers, in which the component man is like the cell of the natural body; and in these cases owing to the greater diversity of function manifested by the industry as a whole as compared with the worker, the social group would doubtless rightly be regarded as superior to the man. But if a cell were to belong to several natural bodies, passing freely from one to another, and thus having a career of its own independent of that of any one of these bodies, it would be analogous to the case of the more developed member of modern society, who may be an American, a Republican, a Hoosier, a Mason, a farmer, a father, and many other things beside. A body composed of such cells would have lost that vital unity, that firm hold of the whole on the part, which distinguishes all developed organisms from those mere agglomerations of cells which mark the lowest forms of plant life.<sup>3</sup>

It may be objected that while the parts of a man are more intimately united than the parts of a society, this is far more than offset by the greater diversity of the latter. But this objection has force only in so far as what is included in the social group is substituted for the functions and properties of the group as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> Economic interdependence is not diminished; it is doubtless increased. But in highly developed communities the economic group is only one of many to which a man belongs.

<sup>2</sup> In other words while admitting *social* pluralism, I should not concede what I understand to be the contention of Laski and others that the conception of the state implies no priority of authority. Cf. H. J. Laski; *Studies in the Problems of Sovereignty*, 1917; *Authority in the Modern State*, 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., *Chlamydomonas Brannii*, J. B. Farmer, *Plant Life* (Home University Library), p. 32.

One may readily be confused by the spell of such expressions as "the national life" or "humanity." How infinitely richer, it may be objected, is the national life than that of any of its members? But one who voices such an objection betrays the fact that he is thinking of the American nation, for example, in terms of everything that is American instead of just those things which are national. Only a very small fraction of the things which Americans do can be said to be done by the nation as such. The nation does, perhaps, own the national forests, or claim cablerights on the island of Yap, or return to a state of normalcy; in any case, the nation does not seek office, or beat its wife or study Einstein, though these are all things that are done by members of the American nation. I do not for a moment question the superiority of one hundred million men to one; indeed, as I shall presently repeat, the very point of my argument is that in so far as society is exalted and admirable it is as a plurality rather than as a unity. I am not doubting the superiority of many forces to one. I am, however, questioning the superiority of the joint physiognomy composed by all to the face of the single concrete and natural man.

There is a further point that is implied in an example used a few moments ago, and deserving of special emphasis. In so far as social organizations like the mechanized industry approach the single human organism in the solidarity of their unity, they debase their members; precisely as unicellular plants surrender many of their functions when they are incorporated into multicellular plants. A well-known example of this is found in what is called the "regimentation" of a well-disciplined army. In case the sum of all the activities, economic, social, intellectual, or artistic, of a number of human beings were thus organized, the whole of each of these originally and potentially human beings would be reduced to being a fraction of some human function. The result would be to make one man grow where several thousand or million grew before. And the chances are that this sole survivor would be considerably less of a man, save only in stature, than those whom he absorbed.

For when we come to apply our second standard of comparison, it seems to be clear that the things which a social group as such can

do are rather less worth doing than the things which a man at his best can do. Just as what an ant-hill does is cruder and more plant-like than what an ant does, so what a group does is more animal-like than what a man does. I do not suppose that anyone would claim that even a society of artists can paint a picture, or that even a national research council can make a scientific discovery. It is fairly clear that you cannot divide a syllogism between three men having the first think the major premise, the second the minor premises, and the third the conclusion. The links that unite men into groups, many and strong though they be, do not seem to be refined enough to guide a train of reasoning. It is equally incorrect, in my judgment, to speak of a social group as self-conscious, because the peculiar relations of selective experience and memory, and the correlations, of implicit speech and hearing that constitute "talking to one's self," are internal to the life-history and mechanism of a single organism.<sup>1</sup> Indeed I should be inclined to say, for reasons that I cannot here make wholly clear, that a social group cannot act purposively. Those threads of connection which unite the past with the present and invest experience with meaning or which unify a general tendency with the acts which are selected as its means, seem to me to be threads of connection that lie wholly within an organism integrated by a single nervous system.<sup>2</sup>

Social groups, on the other hand, do grow, migrate, and fight; and they have customs. They may be loved or hated; and they may be the subjects of legal rights and duties.

We are thus led to the following conclusion: While social groups may fairly be regarded as wholes having individuality and systematic unity, and while as such they doubtless duplicate many of

<sup>1</sup> W. McDougall, in his *Group Mind*, 1920, pp. 215-17, appears to regard group self-consciousness as occurring when "the idea of the people or nation as a whole is present to the consciousness of individuals." But unless one commits the fallacy of composition and attributes to the whole what is true only of the members, there is no self-consciousness here. The individual is not conscious of *himself*, nor the group of *itself*, but the individual (one self) is conscious of the group (another object).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the writer's discussions of purpose in "Docility and Purposiveness," *Psychology Review*, January, 1918; and "A Behavioristic View of Purpose," *Journal of Philosophy*, February 17, 1921.

the organic properties of their human members, they are wholes of a type inferior to the best that is typical of their human members.<sup>1</sup>

Are we, then, to say that a society is a mind, or a person, or a self? That will depend on how we construe these terms. If we use them to refer to the lower functions of man, to his body as a quantity of matter, to his consciousness as quantity of states, or to his habits, or the force which he exerts, then yes. If we use them to refer to certain abstract properties such as organization, co-ordination, division of labor, or unified control; then again yes. But if we use these terms to signify the higher unities and prerogatives of man, then they are inapplicable to a social group. And it is certainly in this latter sense that they have commonly been employed. For it has been inferred from their application to society that the social whole is therefore an end to which man may properly subordinate himself, or a divinity that he may properly worship.

There are two further topics that require brief mention if this paper is to escape serious misunderstanding. The first of these is "personification." To personify is intentionally to apply personal epithets or forms of personal representation to an object that is known not to be a person for the purpose of developing a sentiment toward the object, or for the purpose of bringing it within the scope of certain rules of action. To describe the church as the "Bride of Christ," or one's college as one's "alma mater," or to represent America as a goddess of liberty, is legitimate personification in so far as it has the effect of securing devotion to an object worthy of it. Or a corporation may be called a fictitious person for the purpose of indicating its legal status and liability as in certain respects identical with those of real or natural persons. The dangers of personification are twofold: It may secure devotion to an object that is unworthy of it; and it may lead to *treating* altogether as personal an object that can only be *felt* as personal, or treated partially as personal. Religious or political allegiance may by this means be prolonged when it should have been forfeited;

<sup>1</sup> We seem to be led to the conclusion that a man (or it is perhaps true of any animal organism) is higher in type than both its included members and its including whole.

or the venerated object may be invested by superstitious belief with properties which it does not actually possess, so that the will is misled and effort misdirected. These are the two forms of idolatry bred by personification where this is not guarded. Both forms have abounded in the attitudes of men toward social wholes.

Let me add also a word about the social relations of the individual man. It is thus that we should conceive the bulk of the facts collected and studied by social psychologists. Here we conceive society not as whole *sui generis* but as a plurality of men interacting with one another, and modified by one another. It is the study of man in the relations which he sustains with others of the same species.<sup>1</sup> Those who make much of the conception of a social mind emphasize the fact that a man's behavior in a group or in a crowd differs altogether from the same man's behavior when alone, or at home. Of course it does. A man's behavior on dry land differs from his behavior in water; he acts differently indoors and out, in summer and in winter. A man's behavior is always a function of his environment; that is one of the things we mean by behavior. Most of what is interesting about the individual consists of what he will do under such and such circumstances. But a man's physical instincts, his reactions to his physical environment, and the modifications he acquires from them, are commonly regarded as his own; and similarly, it would seem clear that a man's human instincts, his reactions to another man and what he learns from him, should be regarded as his—or the other man's. There is no more reason in the one case than in the other why we should attribute the properties arising from the interaction of a man and his environment to a third being invoked for the purpose; unless the new properties which thus arise contradict those of the man. If a man and a woman marry, the interrelation generates qualities in each; and these qualities should be predicated of each, as the marital qualities of the man or the woman. There are certain characteristics, such, for example, as being an even number, or walking down the street arm in arm, that can only be attributed to the couple, and cannot

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent statement of this view of social psychology, cf. F. H. Allport, "Behavior and Experiment in Social Psychology," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 1919.



be attributed either to the man or the woman without contradicting his or her numerical or anatomical properties. But I venture to say that most of the interesting and significant facts of married life are of the first rather than of the second variety; and that it is more fruitful to study the history of the man and the woman each in the environment of the other, than to study the history of the couple.

It is possible of course to use the expression "social mind" to describe those properties of the individual human mind which are relative to others of the species, as one may speak of a man's spring mind or autumn mind, his before-breakfast mind or his after-dinner mind, his domestic mind, and his company mind. It is one of the unfortunate accidents of language that this is possible.<sup>1</sup> For this is something wholly different from that social mind which is regarded as a new being of a higher order and which has constituted the main theme of the present paper.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above.